

Imagine it's the year 1787.

You're a farmer, a shopkeeper, a tenant, a hired hand or slave. The newly formed United States of America has fought and won a war for independence. In Philadelphia, a new Constitution is being created that will form the foundation of democracy. Our state, Delaware, is the first to sign the Constitution. And you have become a part of history.

On Delaware Day, Delaware's citizens celebrate our state's leading role ratifying the U.S. Constitution. What was it like to live during those times? How did it feel to be part of this historic moment? Who were the Delaware people who signed the Constitution? Find out by taking a look at the many books and other resources available at Delaware libraries. Check out a few, and enjoy taking a trip back in time!



They all envisioned a future of freedom.

Delaware Day

On September 17, 1787, the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia concluded with the signing of the United States Constitution. Because nine states were required for ratification, each state elected delegates to state conventions to accept or reject the Constitution.

In early December the Delaware delegates met at Battell's Tavern (also known as the Golden Fleece Tavern) in Dover. On December 7, 1787, they ratified the United States Constitution, making Delaware the first state to approve this new form of democratic government. Since that time, Delaware has been called "The First State."

In 1933, Governor C. Douglass Buck responded to a statewide petition drive to designate December 7 as Delaware Day. The year 2008 marks the 75th anniversary of this Commemoration.



Delaware Department of State, Delaware Division of Libraries
and Delaware Public Libraries

Take a Trip Back in Time!

Discover your heritage.
Explore our past.



Explore Delaware's History!

Have fun learning about the people, places and events that formed Delaware's unique history, with these books available at Delaware libraries—
www.lib.de.us

Children's Resources

F is for the First State A Delaware Alphabet

Crane, Carol, and Elizabeth Traynor

Though small in size, Delaware is a treasure trove of history, inventions, and garden wonders.

A More Perfect Union: The Story of Our Constitution

Maestro, Betsy & Giulio

Covers the birth of the Constitution from the initial decision to hold the convention, to the adoption of the Bill of Rights.

Shh! We're Writing the Constitution

Fritz, Jean, and Tomie dePaola

An account of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 written in an interesting way to engage youngsters.

Thirteen Colonies: Delaware (1638-1776)

Arnold, James, and Roberta Wiener

Facts and history of how Delaware became a colony.

Adult Resources

A Brilliant Solution: Inventing the American Constitution

Berkin, Carol

The author takes a fresh look at the men who framed the Constitution, the issues they faced, and the times in which they lived.

Historic Photos of Delaware

Rendle, Ellen

This collection of photographs celebrates the First State's history with an eclectic mix of photographs from throughout the state.

History of Delaware

Munroe, John A.

A history of Delaware from the early 17th century to the present.

History of Delaware, 1609-1888

Scharf, John Thomas

Extensive history of Delaware from 1609-1888, in 2 volumes.

The Life and Times of John Dickinson, 1732-1808

Stille, J. Charles

A reprint of papers that detail John Dickinson's life from the early years of his family to the writing of the Constitution.

Framers of the Constitution

McGee, Dorothy Horton

Outlines the events leading up to the adoption of the Constitution and describes the lives of its signers.

Historic Places Commemorating the Signing of the Constitution

U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Parks

Guidebook of the historic sites surrounding the signing of the Constitution.

The Summer of 1787: The Men Who Invented the Constitution

Stewart, David O.

This book takes us into the room in which delegates struggled for four months to produce the document that would define a nation.

The Signers of the Constitution of the United States

Quinn, C. Edward, and Thomas Ruhf

Presents brief biographies of the men who signed the Constitution and of the non-signing delegates.

The U.S. Constitution and Fascinating Facts About It

Text of the United States Constitution and facts about the signers and events surrounding it.

Websites

Delaware Day—Delaware Department of State
delawareday.delaware.gov

The Constitution—U.S. Senate

www.senate.gov/civics/constitution_item/constitution.htm

U.S. Constitution: Analysis and Interpretation—Government Printing Office

www.gpoaccess.gov/constitution/index.html

The Federalist Papers—Library of Congress

thomas.loc.gov/home/histdox/fedpapers.html

Essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay about how the government under the Constitution would operate.

This Day in Delaware History—Delaware Public Archives

archives.delaware.gov/thisday.shtml

A calendar of Delaware history, compiled by historian Roger Martin

Documents Exhibits from "Delaware's Road to Ratification"—Delaware Public Archives

archives.delaware.gov/exhibits/document/index.shtml